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**Letter dated 31 May 2016 from the Permanent Representatives of
Belarus, Egypt and Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the
Secretary-General**

Writing on behalf of the 25 States Members of the United Nations that comprise the Group of Friends of the Family (Bangladesh, Belarus, the Comoros, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Libya, Malaysia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, the Sudan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Yemen and Zimbabwe), we have the honour to transmit a statement in support of the family (see annex) that was adopted at a special high-level event entitled "Uniting nations for a family-friendly world", held at United Nations Headquarters on 16 May 2016.

We would appreciate it if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 28.

(Signed) **Andrei Dapklunas**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Belarus
to the United Nations

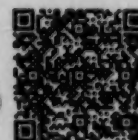
(Signed) **Amr Abdellatif Aboulatta**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Egypt
to the United Nations

(Signed) **Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Qatar
to the United Nations

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Annex to the letter dated 31 May 2016 from the Permanent Representatives of Belarus, Egypt and Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Special high-level event: "Uniting nations for a family-friendly world"

United Nations Headquarters, 16 May 2016

Statement in support of the family

We, the members of the Group of Friends of the Family, comprising the People's Republic of Bangladesh, the Republic of Belarus, the Union of the Comoros, the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Republic of Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Iraq, the State of Kuwait, the Kyrgyz Republic, Libya, Malaysia, Nicaragua, the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the Sultanate of Oman, Pakistan, the State of Qatar, the Russian Federation, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Federal Republic of Somalia, the Republic of the Sudan, the Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, the Republic of Uganda, the Republic of Yemen and the Republic of Zimbabwe, having met on 16 May 2016 at United Nations Headquarters in New York at the special high-level event, "Uniting nations for a family-friendly world", dedicated to the International Day of Families,

1. *Recognize* that the family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State, as envisaged in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and binding international instruments, in particular the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
2. *Acknowledge* that the family plays a key role in development and, as such, should be strengthened, with attention to the rights, capabilities and responsibilities of its members;
3. *Recognize* the family as uniquely suited to advance the social and economic well-being of all its members, as well as society at large, and recognize also, in particular, that the family has the responsibility for the nurturing and protection of children and that children, for the full and harmonious development of their personality, should grow up in a family environment and in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding;
4. *Stress* that the family, as the natural environment for the growth and economic well-being of all its members, particularly children and youth, should be assisted and protected so that it may fully assume its responsibilities within the community;
5. *Highlight* the role of family members, especially parents and other legal guardians, in strengthening the self-image, self-esteem and status of girls and boys and in protecting their health and well-being;
6. *Stress* that equality between women and men and women's equal participation in employment and shared parental responsibility are essential elements of a policy on the family;
7. *Note* that the family, while respect for the rights of its members is ensured, is a strong force for social cohesion and integration and intergenerational solidarity and development, and that the family plays a crucial role in the

preservation of cultural identity, traditions, morals, heritage and the values system of society;

8. *Underline* the importance of strengthening intergenerational partnerships and solidarity among generations, and stress the need in this regard to promote opportunities for voluntary, constructive and regular interaction between young people and older generations in the family, in the workplace and in society at large;

9. *Recognize* that stable, supportive and nurturing family relationships, supported by communities and, where available, professional services, can provide a vital shield against substance abuse, particularly among minors;

10. *Note with concern* that the contribution of the family in society continues to be largely overlooked and underemphasized, and note the potential of the family to contribute to national development and to the achievement of major objectives of every society and of the United Nations, including the eradication of poverty and the creation of just, stable and secure societies;

11. *Remain convinced* that the family can also contribute to eradicating hunger, achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality and empowering women, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health and combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases;

12. *Acknowledge* the role that the family plays as a contributor to sustainable development, and stress that it will be impossible to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its promise that "no one will be left behind" unless the family is empowered to effectively fulfil its role within society;

13. *Recognize* the important role of civil society, including research institutes and academia, in advocacy, promotion, research and policymaking and, as appropriate, the evaluation of family policy development and capacity-building;

14. *State* our disappointment regarding the attempts to withdraw the theme of the family from the United Nations agenda for the sake of controversial issues;

15. *Invite* the Secretary-General, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and other United Nations organizations, agencies and entities, including relevant special procedures mandate holders and treaty bodies, within their respective mandates and competence, to pay due attention in their work to the protection of and assistance to the family as the natural and fundamental group unit of society and to refrain from any inherent controversial actions that depart from the widely accepted family concept;

16. *Express* our full support for the annual Group of 77 and China initiative on the International Year of the Family, to be presented at the seventy-first session of the General Assembly;

17. *Commit* ourselves to working together with other Member States, the United Nations and civil society to protect the family everywhere and to adopt pro-family policies at all levels to secure a safer and more prosperous future for the family and all its members, in particular children;

18. *Decide* to remain seized of the matter.